

### VACCINATION OF FOREIGN SEAFARERS IN SOUTH AFRICAN PORTS

ALL SAMSA PERSONNEL, SHIP AGENTS, PORT AUTHORITIES, TERMINAL OPERATORS, SHIP OWNERS AND OTHER INTERESTED AND AFFECTED PARTIES

<b>ISSUE DATE</b>	23 September 2021	<b>EXPIRY DATE</b>	22 September 2026 or unless withdrawn	<b>REFERENCE</b>	SM6/5/2/1/MN
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#### Marine Notice's affected

<i>Cancelled or superseded:</i>	None	<i>Read in conjunction with:</i>	Not applicable
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#### SUMMARY

This marine notice serves to inform foreign seafarers in South African ports that they are eligible for vaccination and further provides guidelines to be followed in order to get vaccinated in South African Ports.

#### Background

The International Maritime Organisation (IMO) has made numerous calls for member States to declare seafarers as "Key workers". This culminated in a resolution that was signed by several States including South Africa committing to declare seafarers as "Key workers". The aim of the resolution was to facilitate crew change, access to medical care and travel during the Covid-19 pandemic.

According to IMO Circular letter [4204/Add.35/Rev.7 dated 20 May 2021](#), by the date of the circular letter 60 states had signed the resolution. Further to the resolution, the WHO on 16 July 2021 updated its [SAGE road map for prioritizing uses of COVID-19 vaccines in the context of limited supply](#). This emphasised the importance of seafarers by placing the seafarers in the priority list of key workers eligible for vaccination alongside the aircrew. This development was welcomed by the IMO.

In a [joint statement](#) by the IMO, ILO, ICAO, WHO and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), stated that, "*Seafarers and aircrew need to be protected through vaccination as soon as possible, to facilitate their safe movement across borders. We also call on governments to identify and prepare for the challenges of COVID-19 vaccination of seafarers and aircrew, particularly for seafarers spending long periods of time away from their home country,*".

In South Africa the Government opened vaccination to all documented foreign nationals. According to the [Department of Health circular](#) dated 17 August 2020 addressed to vaccination sites, "*All documented South Africans and foreign nationals must be registered on the EVDS, and vaccinated.*"

#### How to get vaccinated as a foreign seafarer

Foreign seafarers in South African ports are regarded as documented foreign nationals as a result they are eligible for vaccination. The type of vaccination provided at a vaccination centre cannot be guaranteed. Ideally seafarers should be getting a one dose vaccine however it has been reported that South Africa has limited supply of such. It is important to note that shore leave is currently not permitted in South Africa.

The following conditions apply in order to get permission from Port Health and Immigration to visit a vaccination site:

1. Confirmation of vaccination appointment,
2. Valid passport,
3. Letter of guarantee from agent responsible for crew/seafarer,
4. Crew will be admitted into the country for medical purpose for 1 (one) day,
5. Seafarers must report to Immigration on their way to the vaccination site and straight after vaccination.

Seafarers and all those involved in this operation are advised to adhere to these requirements and the current laws of the country.

Ship owners and Agents must provide Port Health with monthly data of the number of crew/seafarers who were vaccinated.

In the event of any seafarer welfare challenges, seafarers can contact: [welfare@samsa.org.za](mailto:welfare@samsa.org.za)

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